

REMARKS

Claims 25-44 remain pending in the application. Claims 1-24 were previously cancelled. Claims 25-27, 33-35, 39-42 have been amended herein. It is respectfully submitted that the claims as amended are in condition for allowance. A notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

In the present office action, Claims 25-44 stand rejected as being anticipated by Brown et al. US 5,566,624. It is asserted that Brown includes a plurality of flexible ribs extending along an internal sidewall of sockets that project inwardly into the socket well, with the ribs being deformable. It is further asserted that the ribs of Brown are “inherently flexible since virtually anything will be bent or flexed if enough pressure is applied to it.” These assertions are respectfully traversed.

The claims as presented define a frame having a specific structure. This structure includes a series of side edges, and at least one socket therein having a plurality of flexible ribs that extend inwardly from the sidewall of the socket. The ribs are specifically limited to be deformable in response to engagement with the foot of an article or an appliance to which the base portion has been mated for purposes of shipping. The specific relationship between the base and the appliance is defined by the preamble of each of the claims. This structure of the appliance defines the function of the elements of the base. The flexible ribs deform in response to engagement with the foot of the appliance (or article) and the side edges of the frame extend along the panels of the appliance, with a central opening defined by the frame side elements. The engagement of the ribs with the foot of the appliance (or article) deflects and resiliently deforms the ribs to retain the base secured to the appliance (or article). As claimed, this structure aligns the side edges to the frame adjacent to peripheral side panels of the appliance (or article). The appliance is resiliently engaged with the base, without relative horizontal or vertical movement between the two. All of these limitations define the structure of the ribs and their flexibility. The prior art of record does not suggest or disclose any of these properties of the ribs.

It is agreed that the claims must be given a reasonable scope. However, merely ignoring words within the claims and specific functional limitations, which define the properties of the claimed elements, is not permissible. Each element of the claims must be considered. Summarily dismissing elements or summarily concluding the properties of the claimed elements are without patentable merit is not appropriate.

As amended, the claims define the term “flexible”. The physical properties claimed are found in the specification as filed. See, e.g., paragraphs [0008], [0033] and [0035], among others.

As stated in paragraph [0035]:

The feet (of the appliance) are accommodated in the sockets by displacing the fins from their radial positions. The fins deflect or deform so as to engage the feet. The engagement of the feet in this manner fixes the position of the appliance on the base and resiliently secures the base to the underside of the appliance. Thus, there is no relative horizontal or vertical movement between the base and the appliance.

Further, the frame of the present invention is defined by the peripheral edges of the appliance structure. To be more specific, there is a central opening within the frame. The relationship between the peripheral sides of the frame and the appliance (or article) structure defines the frame as claimed.

Brown is directed to producing a rigid structure. There is nothing in Brown that would suggest to a person of ordinary skill in the art to construct a well with flexible, resiliently deformable ribs. Further, Brown says nothing about providing a central opening within the frame structure.

It is respectfully submitted that the prior art, and particular the cited Brown reference, does not suggest or disclose a base structure having a central opening with a plurality of sockets thereon for flexibly receiving and resiliently retaining the feet of the appliance (or article), such that the appliance and the base structure are engaged to one another. The limitations of the claims are clear and definite. The prior art does not include these limitations. Manifestly, the claims as amended are in condition for allowance. A notice of allowance is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner feels that further minor amendments will bring about allowance of the claims, he is invited to contact the undersigned via telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJD', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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